

AN ANGER LADDER

An Anger Ladder is used to help you overcome the stress associated with anger. You can list five situations which produce varying levels of anger, and then rank them from least stressful to most stressful and anger provoking. You can also list and describe below, next to the Number 5, a situation which has made or would make you most angry. Next, list and describe a situation after the Number 1 below which

has made or would make you the least angry. Then fill in situations for Numbers 2-4 which produce increasing levels of anger, frustration, and anxiety. Your counselor or Group Leader will help you use these anger producing scenes in combination with relaxation to help you overcome stress and better cope with anger.

1. Low Anger:

2.

3.

4.

5. Extreme Anger:

Before beginning to think about these situations remember to review your relaxation techniques. Think about the first situation or least anger producing situation in your life. This could consist of specific incidents with your spouse that triggered an angry reaction in yourself. As you are thinking about this situation and starting to feel your body react to the situation, begin applying the relaxation techniques which you have learned. You will notice yourself not reacting so strongly about the situation. Do this several times with each item on your list until you are comfortable thinking about them, talking about them, and being in the situation face-to-face. This may take several sessions.

BASIC ANGER MANAGEMENT WHAT ABOUT ANGER?

What is anger?

- An emotion like love, fear or joy.
- A feeling. It affects the way you experience life.
- A communication. It sends information to others.
- A cause. It produces specific effects and results.

(Weisinger, 1985)

Anger tells us there is something wrong that needs changing. It is important to growth and adjustment to learn to feel and express a wide range of emotions. Anger is normal. However, inappropriate behavior is not "normal." Inappropriate behavior is physical violence, threats, verbally abusive comments and sexual abuse.

Anger triggers

- Frustration
- Extreme stress
- Feeling put down
- Fear of rejection
- Social learning experience
- Someone hurts you

Three components of anger

- **Physiological** - Body changes, sweating, increased heart rate, quickened breathing, trembling, brain wave pattern changes, face flushing.
- **Feeling** - Affect, tense, emotion, depressed thinking, "flight or fight" response.
- **Expressive** - Violent verbal outbursts, physical violence, threats of violence (slamming doors, etc.), creative art, music, writing, sports, energized behaviors.

When is anger dysfunctional?

- Excessive, frequent, prolonged, or expressed inappropriately.

What factors influence anger?

- Degree of arousal, awareness
- Past learning and experience
- Present situation
- Interpretation of the arousal
- Environment
- Temperament, personality
- Self esteem

BASIC ANGER MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

Why doesn't everyone experience the same emotional reactions in a situation?

- Different past experiences
- May focus on different cues to explain the arousal
- Label feelings differently
- Different personalities

Effects of anger

- Positive - Can motivate and energize behavior
Creative expressions, art, music, writing
- Negative - Physical problems, illness
Mental and emotional problems lowered self-esteem
Work problems
Relationship problems
Behavioral problems, violence

How can you tell when someone is getting angry?

- Behavior - Slamming doors, stomping feet
- Verbal - Sarcastic tone, attitude, talking loud, gruff, saying directly that they are angry
- Bodily cues - Face flushing, ears turn red, tense body posture, fists clinched

How do you react to someone's anger?

- Get angry
- Ignore it
- Walk away
- Leave the house
- Withdraw in fear
- Other:

Some ways to deal with anger

- Be aware of your body cues.
- Identify the source of the anger. Why are you angry?
- Deal with the situation or problem causing the anger.
- Talk to someone.
- Accept anger as abnormal; however, remember inappropriate behavior is not "normal."

There are many other ways of dealing with anger.